

16. (Amended) A printing blanket comprising:

a sleeve;

a compressible layer made of a radiation-curing polymer disposed over the sleeve;

a reinforcing layer made of the radiation-curing polymer disposed over compressible layer; and

a print layer made of the radiation curing polymer disposed over the reinforcing layer.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the drawings with the attached formal drawings and approve the change identifying arrow 5.

REMARKS

The disclosure and drawings were objected to. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10 to 13, 16 to 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Claims 2, 5 to 7, 9, 14, 15 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103.

The specification has been amended. Claims 1, 3, 10 and 16 have been amended. Claims 18 and 20 have been canceled. New formal drawings have been submitted.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Specification and drawings

The specification and drawings have been amended as requested by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested, and applicants thank the Examiner for noting the grammatical errors.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10 to 13, 16 to 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Castelli. Claims 2, 5 to 7, 9, 14, 15 and 19 were rejected under 35

U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Castelli in view of Cushner and McConnell.

Castelli discloses preparation of a cylindrical blanket by spreading of a compressible layer on a rotating but axially stationary sleeve using a floating knife or roll. Infrared lamps heat the compressible layer to cure it. A reinforcing layer made of yarns may be added.

Cushner discloses methods and an apparatus for forming cylindrical photosensitive elements on a fixed length flexible sleeve on a mandrel. As discussed by Cushner at column 9, lines 1 to 7, the flexible sleeve is pushed onto the mandrel by an operator. This is a flexographic printing sleeve manufacturing process.

McConnell discloses another flexographic printing sleeve preparation in which tapes are wound spirally to form flexographic printing sleeve. The sleeve is not a base for anything, but rather forms the entire printing sleeve itself.

Claim 1 as amended recites a device for manufacturing a printing blanket having "a continuously axially-moving base sleeve" and a liquid applicator applying a radiation-curing polymer to the base sleeve.

Claim 10 has been amended to recite "placing a radiation-curable polymer over a continuously axially-moving base so as to form a layer of a printing blanket."

Neither Castelli nor Cushner nor Mc Connell shows a continuously axially-moving base sleeve, over which a polymer is laid. In Cushner the flexible sleeve is not continuous. In McConnell there is no base, as the entire flexographic printing form is created by tapes.

In addition it is respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious to apply the flexographic printing techniques of Cushner and McConnell to a printing blanket, which is used in non-flexographic lithographic printing presses. There also is no teaching or motivation to apply the teachings of flexographic photosensitive sleeves for use with the compressible layer blankets of Castelli.

Claim 16 has been amended to recite that all the layers, including a reinforcing layer are made of the same radiation-curing polymer, which provides for more efficient production. Castelli teaches away from such a construction as a reinforcing layer with yarn is used.

Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 rejections with respect to claims 1,

10 and 16, as well as to the remaining dependent claims 2 to 9, 11 to 15, 17 and 19, is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

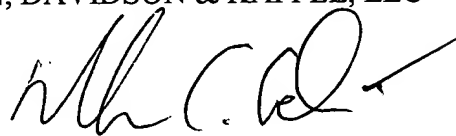
It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and applicants respectfully request such action.

If any additional fees are deemed to be due at this time, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the same to Deposit Account No. 50-0552.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVIDSON, DAVIDSON & KAPPEL, LLC

By



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I hereby certify that this correspondence and/or documents referred to as attached therein and/or fee are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as "first class mail" in an envelope with sufficient postage addressed to "Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231" on October 15, 2001.

DAVIDSON, DAVIDSON & KAPPEL, LLC

BY:



Christina Colocotronis

Re: Application of: **James Brian VROTACOE, et al.**
Serial No.: 09/893,757

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VERSION SHOWING CHANGES

IN THE SPECIFICATION

[0007] Commonly-assigned U.S. Patent [Application] No. [09/472,337] 6,257,140, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein, describes gapless tubular printing blankets produced continuously and cut to length as desired. The sleeve and print layer are "continuously" formed in that the sleeve forming station continues to form an additional portion of the sleeve while the print layer forming station applies the print layer to the previously formed portion of the sleeve. Wound tapes or cross-head extruders are used to apply various layers.

[0047] Over the compressible layer 16 [between] after grinding [device] may be deposited, for example by a liquid applicator device, a reinforcing layer 14 (Fig. 2). The durometer of the reinforcing layer, which also may be urethane, preferably is greater than 70 shore A, and preferably about 70 shore D.

[0052] As used herein, the term print layer, or printing layer refers to a[n] polymeric material such as urethane which is suitable for transferring an image from a lithographic printing plate or other image carrier to web or sheet of material, with such print quality as the particular printing application requires.

[0053] Although the preferred embodiments of the printing blanket in accordance with the present invention [has] have been illustrated herein as including a compressible layer, a reinforcing layer, and a print layer, it should be understood that the sleeve is not necessarily part of the blanket.

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A device for manufacturing a printing blanket comprising:
 - a continuously axially-moving base sleeve;
 - a liquid applicator applying a radiation-curing polymer to the base sleeve; and
 - a radiation source curing the radiation-curing polymer.
3. (Amended) The device as recited in claim 1 further comprising a second liquid applicator applying a second polymer over the radiation-curing polymer.
10. (Amended) A method for forming a tubular printing blanket comprising the steps of:
 - placing a radiation-curable polymer over a continuously axially-moving base so as to form a layer of a printing blanket; and
 - curing the radiation-curable polymer using a radiation source.

16. (Amended) A printing blanket comprising:

a sleeve;

a compressible layer made of a radiation-curing polymer disposed over the sleeve;

a reinforcing layer made of the radiation-curing polymer disposed over compressible layer; and

a print layer made of the radiation curing polymer disposed over the reinforcing layer.